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TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: ENLISTING AUSTRALIA TO SOLICIT ASSISTANCE PLEDGES
FOR AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. STATE 32155
[B.](#) STATE 44359

[¶](#)1. (U) In the lead-up to the June 12 Paris Support Conference for Afghanistan, the U.S. Government will be engaging emerging donors to present U.S. objectives for the conference and encourage participation and financial pledging (Ref A) . At a meeting on Afghanistan in Ottawa last month, Australian Assistant Secretary for Iraq and Afghanistan Paul Robillaard told U.S.

Afghanistan Coordinator Pat Moon that Australia stood ready to help solicit pledges in the lead up to the Conference.

[¶](#)2. (U) The U.S. Government's overarching goal at the Paris Support Conference is to join the international community in reaffirming our long-term commitment to Afghanistan and putting money behind an effective, Afghan-led strategy for development. Afghanistan's partners, with UN Special Representative to the Secretary General for Afghanistan Kai Eide in the lead, should commit to improving the quality of life for the Afghan people. Particularly, we hope the international community uses the Paris Conference as an opportunity to support the vision Kai Eide presents of the enhanced role of the UN in Afghanistan, to commit to taking actions necessary to ensure aid reaches the Afghan people through better coordination and assistance monitoring; and to increase the Afghan Government's ownership of its own development.

[¶](#)3. (U) We hope Afghanistan's partners come to the conference prepared to pledge assistance to support the Afghan-identified development priorities and the 2009 and 2010 elections (Ref B). To be effective, our commitments must be met by a complementary Afghan pledge to improve accountability and execute a concrete plan to fight corruption. We are urging the Afghan Government to come to Paris prepared to announce these commitments.

[¶](#)4. (U) We would like to accept Australia's offer to pursue pledges of assistance from its neighbors who are capable of helping Afghanistan. Without the continued generosity of the international community, Afghanistan's fragility will remain a threat to regional and worldwide security.

[¶](#)5. (U) Particularly, we want to enlist Australia to seek foreign assistance pledges for Afghanistan from Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei. Singapore and Malaysia have helped in the past, and Brunei can surely afford it. The French have confirmed that they will be invited to the June 12 Paris Conference.

[¶](#)6. (U) In May 2007, the Singapore military sent a five-man medical team to Afghanistan to

operate as part of the New Zealand Defense Forces' provincial reconstruction team for about three months in Bamiyan Province. The team established and operated a dental clinic at Bamiyan Hospital; a team that followed rehabilitated and constructed bridges throughout the province. Singapore has announced it will be returning teams to Bamiyan province in the summer of 2008. It has also indicated it will send two consecutive deployments of 20 medical personnel to support the Australian/Dutch field hospital in Oruzgan province, starting summer 2008. Singapore also continues to send for 90-day deployments

a KC 135 refueling tanker to the Gulf to conduct an air-to-air refueling mission in support of multi-national forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. Malaysia also provided a "short-course" training in "customs, diplomacy, construction contracts, and other fields" for 100 Afghan government workers in 2003. Australia could thank Singapore and Malaysia for their previous efforts and ask them to consider reinvesting in Afghanistan, where security concerns remain a threat to regional stability.

¶7. (U) Australia could also push Brunei to deliver on previous plans to help Afghanistan that have yet to materialize. According to Embassy reporting, his Excellency Pengiran Haji Mohd Yunus PgHj Mahmud, Ambassador of Brunei to the UK, attended the 2006

London Conference and although Brunei did not pledge, he nevertheless promised to contribute \$5 million to the Kapisa Medical Center project. However, this project never materialized. In the lead up to the Paris Conference, we should re-engage and urge Brunei to make good on its previous offers of assistance.

¶8. (U) Australia could encourage these states to invest in Afghanistan's development through contributions to trust funds and election support. As we did with Malaysia in the lead up to the Paris Conference, Australia could encourage Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei to consider making contributions to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund, and the Law and Order Trust Fund. Australia could also encourage these nations to provide support for the 2009 and 2010 elections. The UN has estimated the total election price tag at approximately \$475 million. Funding for voter registration, due to begin in August, is particularly urgent and we are encouraging donors to provide funding now. Failure to fill the shortfalls in elections support ultimately threatens the derailment of necessary electoral projects and jeopardizes the 2009 and 2010 elections, the next benchmarks in Afghanistan's democratic development.

¶9. (U) ACTION REQUEST: We request Embassy Canberra approach senior-level government counterparts to take up Australia's offer to lobby for foreign assistance pledges for Afghanistan. Post is requested to present U.S. objectives for the Paris Conference, as stated in paragraphs 2 and 3, and encourage financial pledges from Singapore, and Malaysia. Post is requested to respond to this demarche to Washington no later than Tuesday May 20, slugged for Lauren Frese (SCA/A). Embassy Kabul should inform the Afghan Government of the U.S. effort. USUN may also draw on this cable as appropriate.

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